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Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park Breaks Ground in Geneva

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GENEVA, NY: Officials today broke ground for the 72-acre Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park, slated for construction just south of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY. Wielding gold shovels and hard hats, Governor George E. Pataki, State Senator Michael F. Nozzolio, Assemblyman Brian Kolb, Station interim director Robert C. Seem, and Susan A. Henry, Ronald A. Lynch Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences held the ceremonial groundbreaking to kick off construction of Phase I of the Park, which includes a 20,000 sq. ft. multi-tenant Flex Technology building and supporting roadway infrastructure.

"The empty field we're breaking ground on today will be transformed into a national center for cutting-edge research and product development in food agriculture and biosciences that will be recognized throughout the nation and around the world," said Governor Pataki. "The Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park will secure the economic future of Geneva and the Finger Lakes region and become a driving force in attracting new high-tech and biotech jobs."

"The park will be a major economic driver for the Station, the city, the county and the region," said Robert C. Seem, interim director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES), and president of the Park's board of directors. "This is the day we dreamed of back in 1995 when this project was first envisioned. Faculty and staff at the Experiment Station and the people of Geneva have been anxiously waiting to see the road and the buildings emerge. I appreciate the support from Senator Mike Nozzolio, Congressmen Sherwood Boehlert and Jim Walsh for being the moving forces behind this project. And the assistance of Governor Pataki has been absolutely essential in the development of the Park and getting us where we are today."

"Cornell University is going to be looking increasingly at technology transfer as a potential engine for economic development both on- and off-campus," said Susan A. Henry, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell. "Increasingly, we will partner with new enterprises involved in cutting-edge technologies in agriculture and the new life sciences, as well as with other universities, SUNY campuses, and high-tech industries."

Pictures are linked to hi-res scans



Officials broke ground for the Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, NY, on Friday, April 16. The park will attract enterprises involved in food, agriculture and bio-based technologies and will be located on 72 acres south of the Geneva campus. The shovel brigade included: (from l-r) James Laurito, president and CEO, RGS Energy Group and president, NYSEG, Energy East Corp.; Nathan Rudgers, Commissioner of the NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets, NYS Assemblyman Brian Kolb; Governor George Pataki; Robert C. Seem, interim director, NYSAES; NYS Senator Michael Nozzolio, James E. Hunter, former director, NYSAES; Susan Henry, Ronald P. Lynch Dean of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell; Don Cass, Mayor of Geneva; and Carmen Orlando, Chariman, Ontario County Board of Supervisors.
CREDIT: R.Way/NYSAES/Cornell

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The Ag & Food Tech Park is affiliated with the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. In addition to enabling start-up and established companies to carry out cutting edge research in food, agriculture and bio-based technologies, the Ag & Food Tech Park will greatly complement existing research and extension programs of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station and Cornell University.

The Flex Technology building will provide space for a series of firms and is expected to create up to 80 new jobs initially. At full build-out of the Park, 1000 new jobs are expected in 10 to 15 years. So far, eight firms have expressed interest in locating at the site. In addition, a 85,000 sq. ft. USDA Grape Genetics facility is expected to be constructed on site, available for occupancy in 2006, housing 30 to 40 scientists.

More than \$7.3 million has been raised for the Park from federal, state, county and city contributions. At full build-out, there will be about 375,000 sq. ft. available at the Park for research development and light production by enterprises engaged in food, agriculture or bio-based technologies. Park officials are already partnering with the Infotonics Center of Excellence in Canandaigua and other universities in central New York to build collaborative relationships.

State Agriculture Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers said, "It's exciting to be here today to see this greatly anticipated project get underway. The Agricultural Experiment Station has always played an important role in the growth of the agricultural industry in New York State. The creation of this Tech Park will enhance Geneva's role and its contributions to the industry."

"Access to the Geneva Ag & Food Tech Park is critically important to our efforts to create jobs in the Finger Lakes Region," said Senator Michael Nozzolio. "By promoting high-tech and research-based industries, we are positioning New York State to be an international leader in innovative and emerging technologies and creating new jobs."

Funding that ensured the spring groundbreaking came in March, when the NYS Department of Transportation announced \$1.5 million in funding through the Industrial Access Program (IAP) for construction of the Park road and other access infrastructure. The funding met the federal matching requirement for a \$2.8 million grant from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) that was received in June 2003. In addition, the state committed \$310,000 to support the construction of the Flex Tech building, in February. Bids for construction and related infrastructure go out next week. A search for an executive director for the Park is underway.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

* Ontario County has provided \$565,000, further secured by the City of Geneva, from the county's revolving loan fund for the Park. This flexible pool of money allowed the Park to get started on funding park operations as well as bricks and mortar. "It also demonstrated a very real commitment to the success of this project by some very far-sighted local government officials," said Seem.

* Efforts to secure federal funding for construction of the USDA-ARS Grape Genetics Center at the park are also underway. In January, \$2.7 million in federal funds for design and site preparation was approved in the Ag Appropriations bill. Cornell and others are seeking an additional \$10.5 million in FY2005 for the first of four phases of infrastructure and laboratory construction. This request is being made in tandem with the effort to build the USDA-ARS Crop-based Health Genomics facility in Ithaca. The Grape Genetics center is expected to create 30 to 40 new jobs.

* The Park is working with the New York congressional delegation to secure funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$750,000 for construction) and additional EDA "capacity building" dollars (\$250,000) for operations.

* Synergistic relationships are being formed among area industries and educational institutions in relation to the Park. The "Strengthening the Links in the Food Chain" workshop held in March is beginning to build the collaborative relationships organizers were hoping for, building bridges between researchers in the biological sciences (in this case, agriculture and food), and the physical sciences that deal with emerging technologies in chemistry, physics, and engineering, especially micro- and nano-science. The scientists at the workshop came from participating institutions like the Experiment Station and Infotonics, as well the Cornell campus in Ithaca, R.I.T., Clarkson, SUNY Cobleskill, and central New York industries like Bird's Eye Foods, C.Y. Farms, Constellation Wine, Pactiv and Xerox.

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Related Links:

Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park information : <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hp/agtech.html>
[\\$2.7 Million for Grape Genetics Lab in Geneva Written into Aq Appropriations Bill](#)

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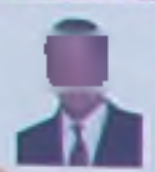
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Food
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Agriculture, Food, and Bio-based Technology



Governor Pataki
and
Senator Nozzolio



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